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The report features the living conditions and political attitudes of Soviet and Satellite university students in the USSR in 1956-1957.

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Report on Foreigners Studying in the Soviet Union

1. Economic Conditions

All of the students, regardless of whether they are foreigners or Soviet citizens, pay a monthly rent of 15 rubles at the student residence. For aspirants [candidates for a degree], the monthly rent amounts to 25 rubles. The rent includes room, electricity, heat, and bed linens at the home, but does not include food and other expenses.

The above prices apply only to the student homes in Leningrad. Prices at the new university in Moscow are much higher. An aspirant there has to pay 60 rubles a month for rent; a student pays about 50 to 55 rubles.

Students who cannot be accommodated at the home -- this applies only to Soviet students, since foreigners have to live at the home -- attempt to rent furnished rooms or rooms-to-share in Leningrad. Since housing facilities are very scarce, landlords engage in shameless profiteering with rented rooms. A sparsely furnished room costs 200 rubles rent a month, and a corner in a room, i.e., part of a room which has to be shared ^e either with another student or with the landlady, costs 100 to 150 rubles.

2. Auxiliary Labor Service Requirements for Soviet Students

The descriptions concerning compulsory loans

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 are not the only hardships to which Soviet students are exposed. Additional hardships are caused by the compulsory labor service which has to be performed during vacations between semesters. All Soviet students have to put in one month in the labor service during ~~XXXXXXX~~ their 2-month summer vacation. This labor service has the aspects of compulsory service and is a prerequisite for the continuation of studies the following semester. The type of labor service varies each year, depending on the respective key requirements as determined by the government, and to some

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extent, on the regional location of the university. In 1956, Leningrad students moved to the area around Leningrad in order to construct pigpens on sovkhoses and kolkhoses. In the summer of 1957, the assignment consisted of performing ~~agricultural~~ farm chores in Kazakhstan; another component of the Leningrad students was put to work draining swamps during both years.

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In addition to the above-mentioned one-month labor service during the summer vacation, students are summoned to the labor service a second time each year the beginning of September, to perform farm work. This again is a compulsory service, and the assignment in each case involves bringing in the harvest. In 1956, Leningrad students had to work in the country for about 4 weeks, until 15 October, to bring in the potato harvest. Students from Tashkent were called up for 2 months in order to bring in the cotton harvest.

All of these actions can be understood only in light of the fact that there is a shortage of agricultural workers in the Soviet Union. The so-called New Lands areas are short of workers, and ~~LXX~~ at Leningrad University it was reported that in 1956, one third of the wheat crop in the New Lands areas could not be harvested. To date, all efforts to stop the migration of agricultural workers to the cities and industrial centers have been unsuccessful. This is primarily due to the indescribably low standard of living in rural areas. On driving through the southern part of the Soviet Union, one finds that there is actually nothing to buy in the markets and in the villages, and that the peasants are destitute. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

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Working conditions in the labor service during the cotton harvest were particularly depressing for the Tashkent students, and ^{they} are characteristic of the system. A total of 12 to 14 working hours was spent in the cotton fields, the food was extremely poor and in effect consisted only of ^{one-pot dishes} ~~stews~~ prepared with noodles. Accommodations were in large dormitories set up in barns.

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In 1956, the cotton-picking quota for each student was established at 60 kilograms per day. Those who brought in their quota received 40 kopecks per kilogram. If the quota was not fulfilled, an amount of 8 rubles per day was deducted from the scholarship allowance, for room and board.

These working conditions, and the abuses of the Soviet system, which become clearly evident in the labor service, are also the reason why the labor service applies only to Soviet students, and why foreigners are not even wanted for this service. It requires great effort on the part of a foreigner to be able to participate in this labor service; for obvious reasons, this is less difficult for the Chinese than for the others.

The possibilities of such labor service are still not exhausted with the compulsory service at harvest time in the fall. During the winter, students are called up for the third time for labor service, but this time it is really on a voluntary basis, and ~~the continuation~~ the continuation of the student's study program is not contingent upon time served in the labor service. In this case, service always entails moving to the neighboring kolkhozes ^{FOR A WEEK,} to chop wood and work in the forests.

3. Development of Political Attitudes among individual Nationalities.

Strength of individual nationalities

The following statements should be regarded only as an approximation, and errors ~~are~~ are not impossible. The ^{ENTIRE} Chinese contingent studying in the Soviet Union numbers 2,000.

As of 1957, the GDR [East German] contingent numbers 800, of whom 500 are studying in Moscow, and 300 in Leningrad.

As for the remaining nationalities, information is available only regarding Leningrad University. There are about 200 Polish students, but it is questionable whether any new contingents will be arriving from Poland. Student groups from Rumania and Hungary number about 150 each, and the CSR contingent is composed of about 200.

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Books and Press Publication

There are no special regulations which apply to students, and in practice the only books and journalistic material available are those to which all ~~SOVIET~~ Soviet citizens ~~generally~~ have access in general. Newspapers and magazines of the East Bloc countries only can be purchased. Western publications, even newspapers and magazines published by the Communist Parties of the West, are not available. German press publications which can be purchased regularly include the Neues Deutschland -- which is about 2-3 days old, the Berliner Zeitung, and the Junge Welt. Newsstands also sell the Yugoslav Borba, but the few copies available are not enough to meet the demand, and the paper is constantly sold out.

The struggle to obtain the U.S. publication, Amerika, is especially great. This is a magazine which is published on the basis of a bilateral contract between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviets are disseminating a similar publication in the U.S. The magazine sells for 5 rubles, which is the official sales price. However, dealers are swamped with demands for copies which have, for all practical purposes, become a black-market commodity. They could sell ten times the number available. As a rule, copies can be obtained only by regularly paying dealers the requested price of 8 rubles.

The Polish Student Group

The Polish student group at Leningrad University occupies a unique position since Gomulka's ^{rehabilitation} ~~rehabilitation~~ and since the events of October 1956. Although outwardly the pattern of political discussions has changed somewhat and arguments have become more moderate, the abysmal differences are essentially the same, and the Poles have not deviated one centimeter from their basic stand on decisive questions. ^{As early as} ~~Already in~~ 1955, when Gomulka's rehabilitation was made known toward the end of the year, the representatives of the Polish student group declared freely and in public that "Gomulka is our best mind;

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he has to become First Secretary of the Workers' Party, or chief of state."

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Then, when the known changes occurred among the leadership of the Polish Workers' Party and in the Polish state apparatus, a wave of joyous agreement and ~~of~~ absolute solidarity ~~between~~ with Gomulka swept the Polish student group. In this connection, the activities of the Poles were not merely confined to approval of the events in their homeland, but they actually sought to open discussions with Soviet students and those of other nationalities, in which they severely criticized the Soviet Union. The discussions centered on the Soviet terror system, the political suppression of other peoples, and the shameless exploitation of the Polish people in particular (forced exportation of Polish coal, Soviet levies on Poland for occupation costs, etc., etc.) ~~The~~ differences between the Polish students and the Soviets at the university eventually increased to such a pitch that the Polish students refused to eat at the same table with the Soviets. Eventually the differences subsided and, on the surface, things appeared to quiet down somewhat.

During the winter of 1956, copies of the Sozialdemokrat, published by the East Bureau of the SPD, in which the Harich case, his platform, and his convictions were presented, were circulated at Leningrad University. Similar leaflets which had apparently been brought to the Soviet Union by vacationers from Berlin, were circulating among the German student group, as well as among the Poles. For the Poles, Harich and Gomulka became symbols of resistance against Bolshevism and ~~opened~~ of a free, democratic road to socialism. The Poles paid little attention to distinctions in this case. To them, both Harich and Gomulka had the same aims, and Harich was their man as much as Gomulka.

In September 1956, a Polish student returned from a brief vacation in Georgia. He related that he had received stormy ovations during his stay there when the population learned that he ^{was} ~~is~~ a Polish national and

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that he sided with Gomulka and with the Hungarian resistance fighters, whose case had already become a crucial issue at that time. He reported that the excited Georgians had literally made the following statement: "If Khrushchev comes here, we will beat him to death." (This same Polish student, however, reported further that the underlying reasons for this enthusiasm on the part of the Georgians for the Poles and Hungarians are quite different from what they appear to be on the surface. For, a large number of these Georgians are enthusiastic Stalinists and their opposition to Khrushchev, therefore, is attributable to entirely different reasons. The Georgians lived relatively well under Stalin since Stalin, because of ~~his~~ national sentiments, strongly favored the Georgian Republic. He built roads there; they enjoyed an especially favorable tax system and were given free reign to develop their national culture. When Khrushchev put an end to these things, unrest developed for the first time in 1956, and the central government in Moscow gave orders to shoot at the crowd.)

The Hungarian Revolution

News of the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution spread like wildfire among the students. The Polish students apparently were the first to hear about it, and their call roused residents in all of the dormitories at the various student homes. There is a revolution in Hungary! This attitude has persisted until the present and all attempts by functionaries loyal to the Soviets, to depict the events in Hungary as a counterrevolution or as an action by fascist gangs, or otherwise, have been in vain.

The Hungarian events ^{IMMEDIATELY} ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ evoked violent differences among the German student group. The majority lined up solidly with the Hungarians while the others, who were in the minority, attempted to champion the SED line. The Embassy in Moscow ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ dispatched a functionary named KAEBEL, who was to attempt to straighten out the ideology of the dissident student group. However, the meeting turned out differently.

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Students got up, spoke out in favor of Poland and Hungary, and the meeting which had been called together by the Embassy functionary, ended with calls such as, "Long live Poland and Gomulka," "Long live the Hungarian people," etc., etc. At the same time the Embassy representative and the Party leadership of the student group had to listen to protests against the failure of the press and radio to furnish information, ^{and} or their dissemination of false reports, about the events in Poland and Hungary.

Arrests of Leningrad students; Resistance Activities

Serious incidents occurred in the wake of the events in Poland and Hungary and their repercussions among the students. In October 1956, Leningrad University students participated in the parade during the October Revolution celebration, in front of the Winter Palace. At that moment a Soviet student who was a member of the Philology Faculty, yelled across the square, "Long live the Hungarian Revolution."

The student was immediately taken away by the militia and sentenced to 6 months in a labor camp. Allowance was made for extenuating circumstances, due to drunkenness.

In January 1957, another student was arrested in Leningrad. A group of students had invited the public for discussions and a meeting in front of the Russian Museum in Leningrad, to discuss cultural problems. Actually, however, there was no discussion of general cultural problems, but Dudin^{ts}ev's work, "Not by Bread Alone," was discussed. The militia, ^{had} of course, learned about this and ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ no doubt was also aware that this was the beginning of a bona fide resistance organization. The leader of this affair, a student of the Philology Faculty, was arrested shortly afterwards and sentenced to 1½ years in a labor camp.

According to accounts by Soviet students, the reactions ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ were far more extensive in Moscow. There, 100 Komsomol members turned in their membership cards because of the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Although they were assured at first that their action would have no further consequences, all of them have since disappeared from Moscow University.

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The Polish students further related that demonstrations had been held in Poland, especially at ^K~~Warsaw~~^K University, on behalf of the Hungarian freedom fighters.

The Chinese Student Group

The Chinese occupy quite a unique position among the foreign students. Although they have been assigned to and share the same rooms with the other students, they keep themselves in considerable isolation, and one has very little personal contact with them. The reasons for this vary, no doubt. One of them is the fact that their general level of education, that is, the level of their schooling and general knowledge is lower than that of the other students. Therefore, they have to study and work harder than the others, and their perseverance in this respect is incredible, compared with European standards. The Chinese study from early morning until late at night, taking time out only for lectures, seminars, and necessary meals. They are the most diligent of all the student groups. By and large they may be described as diligent secondary school students with a great zeal for learning. Their busy study schedule is one of the reasons why they have absolutely no personal contact with the others. The Chinese simply have no time for anything else.

The above-mentioned desire for learning on the part of the Chinese students accounts for the fact that they never participate in the customary student discussions dealing with the political questions of the day, which have preoccupied the students especially ever since Khrushchev made his Stalin speech, and which have evoked heated arguments. They waste no time on these discussions which they consider irrelevant, so that absolutely nothing is known about their personal circumstances, their social ^{STANDARDS} ~~background~~, their background, and their primary education.

A third factor which should be mentioned is that the discipline among the Chinese student group is far stricter than among any of the other groups.

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They are held accountable for the slightest misdemeanor^s, and are subsequently ordered to return to China. For instance, a fight ensued recently between a Chinese and another student, with the result that the Chinese student was immediately sent back to China. It is also striking that the Chinese students apparently receive very little political indoctrination. While Mao Tse Tung's "100 Flowers" speech⁹ naturally aroused heated discussions among ^{the} other student groups, this topic likewise failed to elicit any response from the Chinese students. The other student groups were thus led to conclude that the Chinese were ~~NOT SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED~~ ^{about} events in their country. However, the final and most significant reason for the ~~unique~~ ^{unique} position of the Chinese student group is their political faith in Mao Tse Tung's system. Whenever the Chinese students make any political statements at all, they evince absolute confidence in Mao Tse Tung's system and his political leadership. In some respects, this again ties in with the generally primitive level of education and culture of the Chinese students, whose entire training made a development of the ability to evaluate and ^{to} form independent opinions concerning active political problems of the West (in this case the Soviet satellite countries are designated as the West) ~~impossible~~. Discussions by the other students of such problems as democracy, free elections, a special and separate road to socialism, the theses of Harich and Gomulka, evoke no response from them, and are not even comprehended. Moreover, one of the basic problems in this case is entirely different from those experienced in connection with any of the other student groups. These other student groups have sufficient possibilities for comparison ^{or} ~~and~~ knowledge, so that they regard the present standard of living in the Soviet Union as low, and their criticism of the Bolshevist^k system is based on this criterion. The Chinese are different. They admire what the Soviet Union has to offer, marvel at the progress of its civilization, its cultural and technical accomplishments, and this very admiration of the Soviet standard of living strengthens their belief in the merits of the system, and perhaps also in the Soviet thesis of learning.

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